



WRITE ANGLE: Brij Katyal

Pic by Vijayanand Gupta

Brijing the gap

The veteran scriptwriter recounts his experiences during the making of *Aamne Saamne* to S Ramachandran

After the success of *Jab Jab Phool Khile*, writer Brij Katyal shot to fame and was signed on by the same director Suraj Prakash to pen *Aamne Saamne*.

Brij Katyal, one of the most wanted men in scriptwriting of yore, was lost in hibernation after the debacle of two of his directorial ventures, *Premika* and *Pasand Apni Apni*.

Katyal, who as ensconced himself prettily to do scriptwriting for TV with serials like *Saans* and *Siski*, rewinds to Kashmir in 1966 where the film *Aamne Saamne* was shot. One of the earliest films to be shot on Kashmiri soil, *Aamne Saamne* starred Shashi Kapoor and Sharmila Tagore.

"There was a discussion about the title. We wanted to keep it *Dastak*, as it is about some the knocks at the door that happen towards the end. But music director Kalyanji Shah who had heard the whole story thought we were referring to something else. He thought it referred to the count of 10 that happens at the end of the film! The villain says 'Main

das tak ginoonga.' We laugh over it even now," says Katyal.

The film finally was called *Aamne Saamne* as the hero Shashi Kapoor and the heroine Sharmila Tagore lived opposite each other.

During the shoots of *Jab Jab Phool Khile* and *Aamne Saamne*, Katyal became good buddies with Shashi Kapoor, whose photograph with him still adorns his walls. "He is a good friend. I have a question to ask him. During the shoot, we had a small party on his *shikara* (Kashmiri boat) and while everyone were enjoying, he went and stood in one corner looking out of the boat. I asked him what the problem was. He told me that he would tell me later. It is 35 years now and I am still waiting for him to tell me what the problem was."

Katyal again recollects an incident when Sharmila refused to do a close-up scene with Shashi Kapoor. "The reason was simple. We

had prodded her to come early and we kept banging at her door. So she came for the shoot without brushing. That was the reason she didn't want to do the shot. So we sent a spot boy to the nearby market and got her a toothpaste and brush and canned the scene later," smiles Katyal.

nostalgia

A master at narrating stories, Katyal also tells us about how Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi visited her in Kashmir. "We never knew that there was something brewing between them. This was the first time that the matter surfaced. The entire unit exchanged glances and smiled when we realised what the matter was," says Katyal.

Katyal is animated when he talks about his films even though they are well over three decades old. The lad who left home with his father's permission, pleading with him to send him the money to learn cinema. "He would have otherwise spent it on my further education. I preferred being in films," says Katyal.

srama@mid-day.com